MARBLE RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

March 2003

Approved by:

Date: March 20/03

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Date: March 21/03

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MARBLE RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK
Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role
The **primary** role of Marble River Park is to protect diverse natural features including a river corridor, pristine forests, rare and unique karst features, an estuary, a unique marine environment, and fast-flowing tidal waters. This 1,512 hectare park protects a provincially significant chinook producing area, and spawning and rearing habitat for coho, steelhead, cutthroat trout and Dolly Varden. Complementing Nature Trust lands in the Marble River estuary, the area contains high value estuarine habitat for over-wintering and migrating waterfowl, marine invertebrates and marine mammals. It also protects nesting habitat for high concentrations of bald eagles near Quatsino Narrows, which itself is a unique environment with exceptionally fast-flowing tidal action.

Secondary Role
The **secondary** role is to provide scenic recreational opportunities in the north end of Vancouver Island. With its diverse habitats and road as well as water access, the park contains a myriad of recreational opportunities. Associated with the marine component of the park, sea kayaking, canoeing and boating are possible. Popular high water-related recreation activities include river fishing, heli-fishing, and white water kayaking. The Marble River is considered to be one of the best steelhead fishing rivers on Vancouver Island. Land-based activities include hunting, hiking, swimming, mountain biking, nature appreciation (especially bald eagles), and wilderness camping. Marble River Park's recreational opportunities are complemented by the Western Forest Products (WFP) recreation site, which is located adjacent to the east end of the park and provides highway access, formalized camping with 33 vehicle-tent campsites, picnic tables, a boat launch, and beach swimming. The recreation site is the beginning of a four-kilometre developed hiking trail that follows the river in the park and has a viewing platform at Bear Falls, a popular location for observing spawning salmon.

Tertiary Role
The **tertiary** role of Marble River Park is to protect the natural environment. The park protects an example of an under-represented temperate forest habitat of the Nahwitti Lowland. It is the second largest contributor (5.6%) out of only 6 protected areas that contribute to the Nahwitti Lowland Ecosection, which is under represented in the protected areas system at 7.6%.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Lack of knowledge of natural and cultural resources	➢ Undertake an inventory of rare species and their habitats. ➢ Gather existing information from government files, WFP, and DFO on park values. ➢ Undertake a cultural inventory and traditional use study in conjunction with First Nations.
Impact of adjacent forest harvesting, adjacent limestone mining, encroachment of exotic species, recreation pressures,	➢ Develop strategy with WFP to address adjacency concerns related increased access, visual impacts, windthrow.

lack of clear park boundaries, harvesting of botanical products (salal) on ecological values	➢ Ensure boundary is well marked. ➢ Work with forest company and Ministry of Forests to refine legal description of park. ➢ Provide signage and educational materials to ensure private resource harvesters are aware of park boundaries, and potential impacts of their activities. ➢ Provide sanitary facilities near popular fishing areas. ➢ Develop interpretive signs to enhance visitor appreciation and understanding.
Fishery management issues: protection, poaching, and enhancement	➢ Work with Friends of Marble River, DFO, fishers and volunteers on management of the fish resource. ➢ Allow access for maintenance and possible expansion of fish ladders, inventory crews, and brood stock collection.
Managing multiple recreation uses – mountain biking, hiking, fishing, kayaking	➢ Liaise with the different user groups. ➢ Acknowledge mountain biking as a pre-existing, and therefore is an appropriate use. ➢ Monitor trail conditions to ensure that trails are not impacted. ➢ Monitor trail use and develop strategies to prevent conflicts between hikers and mountain bikers.
Lack of clarity as to how to get to the park	➢ Liaise with WFP/Ministry of Transportation to install directional signage. ➢ Work with WPF to continue park access through the campground. ➢ Investigate the possibility of acquiring the campground.
First Nation relations	➢ Develop good working relationships with First Nations to establish an understanding about common issues and concerns.

Zoning

Natural Environment Zone -- covers the entire area of the park (1,512.1 hectares) in recognition of the natural and recreational features. The objective of this zone is to protect scenic values and to provide recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

Conservation

Representation - ecosection	☒	Marble River Park is the 2nd largest (with 5.6%) out of 6 protected areas that contribute to the under-represented Nahwitti Lowlands Ecosection, which has only 7.6% of its area protected. Cape Scott Park is the largest contributor with 87.2%. Contributes minimally (0.5%) to the representation of the Vancouver Island Shelf *Marine* Ecosection, which has only 5.4% of its area protected.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	☒	Minimal contribution (0.8%) to the representation of CWHvm1, which is under represented in the protected areas system at 7%.
Special Features	☒	River canyon, karst, estuary, marine mammals, high concentration of bald eagles (19 nests), sea caves, narrow fast water passage
Rare/Endangered Values	☒	Provincially significant fish habitat for chinook salmon and steelhead. Spawning and rearing grounds for coho, and *blue-listed* cutthroat trout and Dolly Varden. Provincially *red-listed* and nationally *threatened* sea otter. *Blue-listed* gray whale. COSEWIC-listed *Special Concern*: Olympia oyster.
Scientific/Research Opportunities	☒	Fish biology, birds and marine mammals, estuarine environments

Recreation

Representation backcountry	☐	Not Applicable
destination	☒	Adjacent to WFP rec site, bald eagle viewing opportunities, fishing
travel corridor	☒	Marine transportation corridor through narrows
local recreation	☒	Mountain biking, fishing, hiking
Special Opportunities	☐	None known at this time
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	☒	Fish way, wildlife viewing at Quatsino Narrows

Cultural Heritage

Representation	☐	Values unknown
Special Feature	☒	Archaeological sites

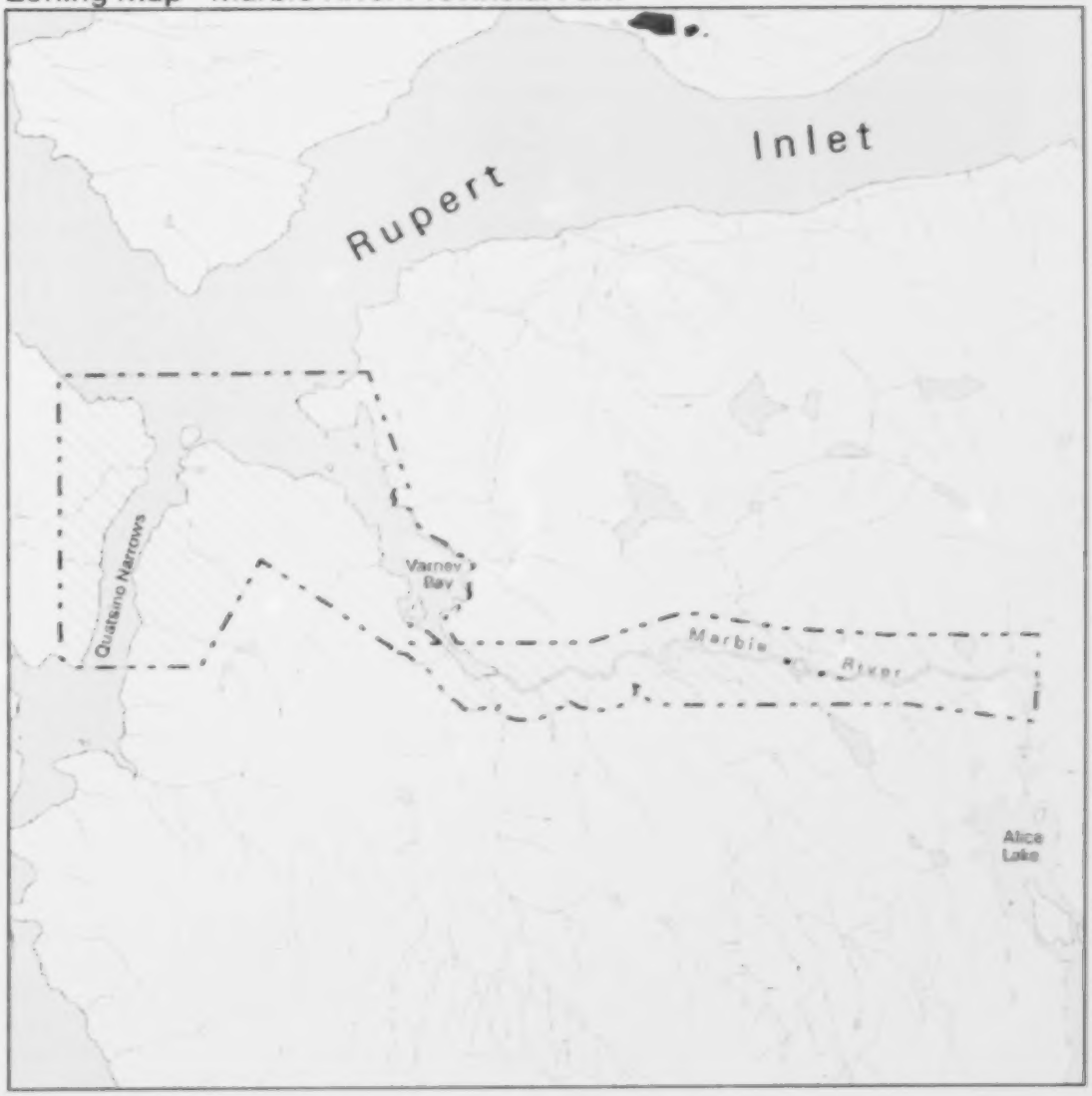
Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	☐	Not Applicable
Relationship to other PAs	☒	Part of a system of protected areas in the north end of Vancouver Island
Co-operative Management Arrangements	☒	Recreational fishery closures specific to the park: In portion of Varney Bay, chinook from June 25 - December 31and all finfish year round.
Partnerships	☒	Shared protection of estuary with the Nature Trust
Vulnerability	☒	Natural values are vulnerable to increasing recreational pressures, adjacent land uses such as mining and logging, exotic species, and non-conforming uses
Relationship to other Strategies	☒	The Marble River study area was identified for protection in the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan

Area: 1,512.1 hectares (1,073 ha upland, 439 ha foreshore)

Date of establishment: July 12, 1995

Zoning Map - Marble River Provincial Park



Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83

Natural Environment
Protected Area Boundary

Produced in Apr 2003 for Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection by MSRM, Decision Support Services

This is a visual representation only and should not be used for legal purposes.